

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	7 February 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	City Centre Streetscape Update
REPORT NUMBER	RES/24/039
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	-
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandy Beattie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with progress updates on streetscape business case updates for Union Street East, Castlegate, Union Street West/West End, Market to Guild Street Phases 2 and 3, together with the cycle infrastructure options for Market to Guild Street Phase 1 and an overall programme update. The report also updates Members on work being undertaken to provide child-friendly information on the overarching City Centre and Beach Masterplan as part of a wider project to ensure children and young people are involved in discussions related to place and placemaking.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:-

- 2.1 Agree Option 3 in the updated Streetscape Full Business Case (Appendix A and as illustrated in Appendix B);
- 2.2 Agree the Market to Guild Street Phase 1 preferred route identified in Appendix C;
- 2.3 Refer the projects highlighted in recommendation 2.1 and 2.2 to the capital planning and budget process for future years' delivery; and
- 2.4 Pending the outcome of the budget process, instruct the Chief Officer (Capital) to monitor projects through the capital planning process reporting progress to Finance and Resources Committee.
- 2.5 Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to formally approach potential funding partners for future years' capital funding contributions toward delivery of all streetscape projects in relation to active travel.

- 2.6 Recognising that segregated cycle facilities are now planned along the length of Union Street, agree that proposals for a Queens Cross to City Centre cycle route be re-absorbed into the wider Westhill to Aberdeen Active Travel Route Outline Business Case (OBC), and instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report the OBC to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee later in 2024.
- 2.7 Note the animation work that has been undertaken to promote the themes within the overarching City Centre and Beach Masterplan, Local Development Plan and Net Zero Aberdeen strategies to children and young people (Appendix D), and thank the young people who have been involved in the project to date.

3 CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- 3.1 At Full Council in December 2022, Council agreed (Ref <http://councilcommittees/documents/g8190/Decisions%2014th-Dec-2022%2010.30%20Council.pdf?T=2>) :

Streetscape Programme

- (i) to agree the Streetscape Full Business Case (Appendix B) and instruct the Director of Resources, following consultation with the Chief Officer - Commercial & Procurement and Chief Officer - Capital, to proceed with the negotiation and execution of contracts for delivery of the following programmes in the first instance and to report progress to the Finance and Resources Committee on a 6 monthly basis from the date of this report:
- a) Union Street Central
 - b) Market Streetscape Phase 1
 - c) Schoolhill/Upperkirkgate;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Resources to progress with developing the remaining streetscape programmes, including options for the provision of physically segregated cycle tracks/lanes, and bring forward for Council consideration and approval an update to the Full Business Case in (i) above following conclusion of design, planning and consultation stages on the below programmes by December 2023:
- a) Union Street East and Castlegate and Justice Street
 - b) Union Street West and West End
 - c) Market Streetscape Phases 2 and 3
- Further design work to be funded from the City Centre and Beach Masterplan budget;
- (iii) to note the instruction from the October 2020 City Growth and Resources Committee that the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning develop the Outline Business Case for the A944/A9119 Multimodal Corridor Study Medium/High Delivery Package (which includes proposals for improved cycle infrastructure between Westhill and Aberdeen City Centre) and instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to report back the Outline Business Case for the A9119 cycle route (Carden Place (including Queens Cross Roundabout), Skene Street and Rosemount Viaduct), currently being progressed via the Bus Partnership Fund, by

December 2023, in order to provide an active travel link from the West End into the heart of the City Centre;

- 3.2 In addition, the Council's Urgent Business Committee in July 2023 approved the inclusion of a segregated cycle lane on Union Street Central to provide continuity with the emerging design layouts for Union Street East and West, both of which include a segregated cycle lane to the north side of the street. This approach to the street layout ensures consistency of conditions and detail, improving the legibility of the street.

The combination of instructions has necessitated further engagement and design work (previously reported to UBC in July), which has an effect on the overall programme. This is updated in the table at 3.10 below and remains indicative until commercial close determines the final delivery programme of each project.

Streetscape Business Case Update

- 3.4 Appendix A presents an update to the Full Business Case for the remainder of the streetscape programme. This details the Union Street East, Castlegate, Union Street West and West End public realm works. It should be noted that all project budgets are estimated at this stage and based on 2023 figures. These figures will therefore remain indicative until commercial close of each project. It is considered prudent, however, to refer the projects to the budget process for future years' capital expenditure should Council wish to proceed with the suggested delivery programme.
- 3.5 Given the likely necessary traffic management measures that will be required to support the construction of Union Street Central (and the new Aberdeen Market), it is considered prudent to ensure that projects are delivered in sequence to manage disruption during the construction period.
- 3.6 Appendix C summarises the options for cycle routes in the Market to Guild Street area, with a recommendation to incorporate the ability to cycle through the Merchant Quarter as part of Phase 1. This will be further explored through the RIBA Stage 4: Technical Design. A fully segregated bi-directional cycle route to be considered in later phases.
- 3.7 The timing of both Stage 4: Technical Design and subsequent construction is intended to coincide with the new Market construction programme, however, Scottish Water has advised that they require to upgrade their network in the area. As such it is prudent to ensure that programme is fully understood to avoid unnecessary disruption to any newly laid street surfaces.
- 3.8 Appendix C highlights the cycle lane options appraisal for Market to Guild Street as per instructions from Council in December 2022, and identifies a preferred route giving as direct access as possible for cyclists. Between the station and the Guild Street junction, cyclists will share the carriageway with traffic before joining a bi-directional cycle lane along Carmelite Street (S). From there a re-designated Carmelite St (N), 'Pedestrian and cycle zone (with local access). From Hadden Street to St Nicholas Lane, cyclists will be sharing the

carriageway with traffic in both directions. Through St Nicholas Lane and St Nicholas Square, cyclists will be in a 'Pedestrian and cycle zone' (as currently exists) before joining Union Street.

- 3.9 Appendix C also suggests that a full bi-directional and segregated cycle lane may be possible in future public realm design along Guild Street/Market Street. This will be explored through the design development of future Market to Guild Street phases pending the outcome of the capital planning and budget process.
- 3.10 Appendix B presents the design layout for streetscape to RIBA Stage 3: Detailed Design, demonstrating how a segregated cycle lane continues the principles agreed for Union Street Central and will be integrated along the whole length of Union Street, through the Castlegate and onwards to the beach area.
- 3.11 In addition, an indicative bus lane has been incorporated for potential future use in the Castlegate to further develop the public transport network between the city centre and the beach.
- 3.12 At this stage it is recommended that the streetscape programme be referred to the budget process to ensure a capital delivery programme can be developed to undertake the proposed works. As stated above, project budgets are indicative and are as accurate as can be at the time of this report. Construction inflation, materials and labour costs are all subject to change in future years and will have an impact on future project budgets.

A9119 Cycle Route

- 3.13 The Queens Cross to City Centre cycle route Outline Business Case (OBC) was requested by Council as a means of providing high quality cycle provision into the heart of the city centre. Since the December 2022 instruction to report the A9119 Cycle Route OBC to Full Council, the Council has agreed to the implementation of segregated cycle facilities on Union Street. Given that Union Street design work is progressing and will provide city centre cycle penetration, it is proposed to re-absorb the Queens Cross to City Centre cycle link back into the wider A944/A9119 Westhill to Aberdeen City Centre Active Travel OBC and for the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report outcomes to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee later in 2024.

Child Friendly Placemaking

- 3.14 The Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan was agreed by Full Council in August 2022, with an annual update subsequently agreed in August 2023. The Masterplan is one of the City's key place-based strategies, alongside the Local Development Plan and the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap. Following adoption of these strategies, work has been undertaken by Officers to ensure that children and young people are able to access and understand the key themes within the documents and be able to express their views, feelings and wishes on these. This is in line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child, which also states that children should have their views considered and taken seriously on matters which affect them.

- 3.15 The initial output of this exercise is presented at Appendix D, which contains a number of comic book style animations which have been prepared based on storyboard drawings and sketches provided by young people over a series of workshop sessions during 2023. The comic books themselves have also been animated, with voice overs again provided by the young people involved in the project. Officers intend to launch the animations over the following weeks, alongside a guide for teachers and parents which will include links to how the work also helps to support elements of the Curriculum for Excellence.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Estimated Project costs are summarised in Appendix A, Section 2 Executive Summary (page 7 in the Business Case) and will require to be factored into the future years capital planning budget. These costs are indicative current estimates which are likely to change if and when technical design proceeds pending the outcome of the budget and capital programming processes.
- 4.3 At this stage it would be prudent to investigate potential external funding sources to assist with both further technical design stages and construction delivery of the streetscape programme.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As project proposals move through to RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design, they will be examined and managed within the professional scope of construction industry accepted standards, ensuring all due diligence exercises and pre-contract enquiries are complete and satisfactory.
- 5.2 Any work that is recommended to property not owned by the Council will require effective dialogue and the owner's consent before it can commence. Other local authority consents, such as planning permission and listed building consent, may also be required for works to buildings.
- 5.3 All changes to vehicular movement on the road network are subject to statutory processes.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The City Centre and Beach Masterplan has been screened through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process and the consultation authorities have confirmed that no Environmental Report specific to this overarching Masterplan is required. Individual plans, programmes and

strategies falling out of the Masterplan will be considered individually, as will any requirements for project-specific Habitat Regulations Appraisals (HRAs).

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to proceed with project impacts on wider city commitments and economic targets	Continue to work collaboratively to achieve masterplan delivery and wider advantages.	M	Yes
Financial	Removal of reduction in anticipated funding streams	Continual engagement and monitor of ongoing funding applications	M	Yes
Financial	Inaccurate/ uncharted underground service and utility survey information leads to increased costs.	Ensure thorough & adequate surveys undertaken prior and during the development phase. Service detection, trial pits, historical review / detailed desk top review underway. Ensure project contingencies are sufficient to cover possible unexpected costs.	H	Yes
Financial	Budget Pressures due to current market volatility.	Robust budgets established based on market intelligence. Independent budget reviews	M	Yes

		with PMO and supply chain are regularly held. Appropriate inflation allowances made in cost plans.		
Financial	General lack of material and resource availability	Early identification of material types and advanced discussions with supply chain on availability.	M	Yes
Operational	Potential impact on existing services associated with any change in levels or disturbance during construction.	Ensure thorough & adequate surveys undertaken prior and during the development phase. Service detection, trial pits, historical review / detailed desk top review underway	M	Yes
Operational	Project scope changes	Seek preferred option agreement with ACC at appropriate stage and progress agreed design to avoid abortive work.	M	Yes
Operational	Insufficient ACC resource	Resource review ongoing and investigating augmenting support through the Hub North Scotland Project Management Office	H	Yes
Operational	Interfaces with existing buildings/ retaining walls/	Investigate, assess, design. Ongoing throughout the	M	Yes

	highways/shared boundaries/other	demolition process.		
Operational	Delay or failure to secure Market Operator	Marketing operator has been identified. Heads of Terms still to be agreed.	H	Yes
Reputational	Created / perceived congestion on surrounding networks due to construction and phasing of works	Review phasing and impact on road networks in the interim phases. Use advance publicity to advise public on works.	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Supports the delivery of Economy Policy Statement 4 – Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan. 1. – Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Supports Outcome 1 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Supports Outcome 7 Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026. Supports Outcome 11 – <i>Healthy life expectancy is five years longer by 2026</i> , in that the proposed improvements should encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling. Increasing physical activity is linked with increasing life expectancy.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Supports Outcomes 13 - <i>Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate</i> , and 14 - <i>Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026</i> , in that the proposal should encourage a shift from motorised to active and sustainable forms of transport. Supports Outcome 14 <i>Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing</i>

	climate Supports Outcome 15 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The report supports the priorities in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) investment in infrastructure, regenerating our city centre, unlock development potential, improve the deployment of low carbon transport, to enable Aberdeen to realise development opportunities in the City Centre Masterplan.</p> <p>The report supports the National, Regional and Local Transport Strategies, particularly the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which prioritises the needs of those walking, wheeling and cycling above other road users, and the 4 pillars identified in the recent Regional Transport Strategy, Nestrans 2040: Equality, Climate, Prosperity and Wellbeing.</p> <p>It also supports the Aberdeen Active Travel Plan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, both of which seek to improve conditions for people walking and cycling in Aberdeen, particularly to, from and within the City Centre, through the provision of more and safer infrastructure.</p> <p>Measures to reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic in the City Centre will support the Air Quality Action Plan, Climate Change Plan, Net Zero Action Plan and Low Emission Zone by contributing to emissions reduction.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	The IIA for the City Centre Masterplan has been updated to reflect this report. At this stage there are no material changes from previous assessments.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	DPIA Screening Questions completed. Neither a brief DPIA or full DPIA is required at this stage
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 City Centre Update report to Council December 2022 (RES/22/290)
<http://councilcommittees/documents/g8190/Public%20reports%20pack%2014th-Dec-2022%2010.30%20Council.pdf?T=10>

City Centre 6 monthly update report to Urgent Business Committee (referred to by Finance and Resources Committee) July 2023 (RES/23/209)
<http://councilcommittees/documents/g8989/Public%20reports%20pack%2007th-Jul-2023%2015.30%20Urgent%20Business%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: DRAFT Streetscape Business Case Update Nov 23

Appendix B: Streetscape Key Considerations

Appendix C: Market St to Guild St Cycle Lane Options Appraisal Summary

Appendix D: Child Friendly Placemaking Animations

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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